(d) Stern action is taken against the guilty army personnel, which acts as a deterrent.

Committee for Examination of defence acquisition policy

2987. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that Government has constituted a committee to examine the current procedure and the necessary changes required in order to modify acquisition process of equipment by the armed forces;

(b) if so, whether the committee has submitted its report;

(c) what are the recommendations made by the committee; and

(d) what efforts Government are making to simplify the Defence production procedure to provide a level-playing field for private players.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI BIJOY KRISHNA HANDIQUE) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Part-I of the Report of the Committee has been submitted on 5.4.2005.

(c) The recommendations made by the Committee revolve around the following:

i) Preparation of a 15-year long-term plan forming the basis for acquisition programme.

ii) Information sharing of requirement of Armed Forces with the Industry.

iii) Identification of entry points for the private sector in the acquisition process.

iv) Accreditation and fostering of Raksha Udyog Ratna (RUR)/Champion.

v) Policy framework to promote participation of SMEs in defence production.

vi) New institutional architecture for defence acquisition.

vii) Defence R&D opportunities both with DRDO and industry.

viii) Promote transparency in decision-making.

ix) Optimum utilization of existing capacity.

x) RFP to include an Offset Clause for contracts valued at Rs. 300 crores and above.

xi) Re-examine the concept of Negative List for Defence exports and setting up of Export Marketing Organisation.

(d) The recommendations made by the Committee including that relating to providing a level-playing field to Private Sector Industry in Defence Production are under examination.

Closure of Srinagar and Avantipur airfields due to snowfall

2988. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recent heavy snowfall in J&K made our Srinagar and Avantipur airfields non-operational for five days;

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take so that such a situation does not recur especially in IAF airfields which are strategically located surrounded by hostile environmental hazards; and

(c) whether we have developed any contigencies plans for meeting such a situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Srinagar and Avantipur airfields were not closed for five days during the recent snowfall. However, Srinagar airfield was closed on 19.2.2005 and 20.2.2005 (2 days) due to unusually heavy snowfall of 10.2 cms and 4.4 cms respectively. Similarly, Avantipur airfield remained closed from 18.2.2005 to 21.2.2005 (4 days) due to unusually heavy snowfall recorded in the range of 0.9 cm to 10.1 cms during the period.

(b) and (c) To combat heavy snow accumulation at the forward airfields, snow clearance equipment is kept ready and deployed immediately on commencement of snowfall.